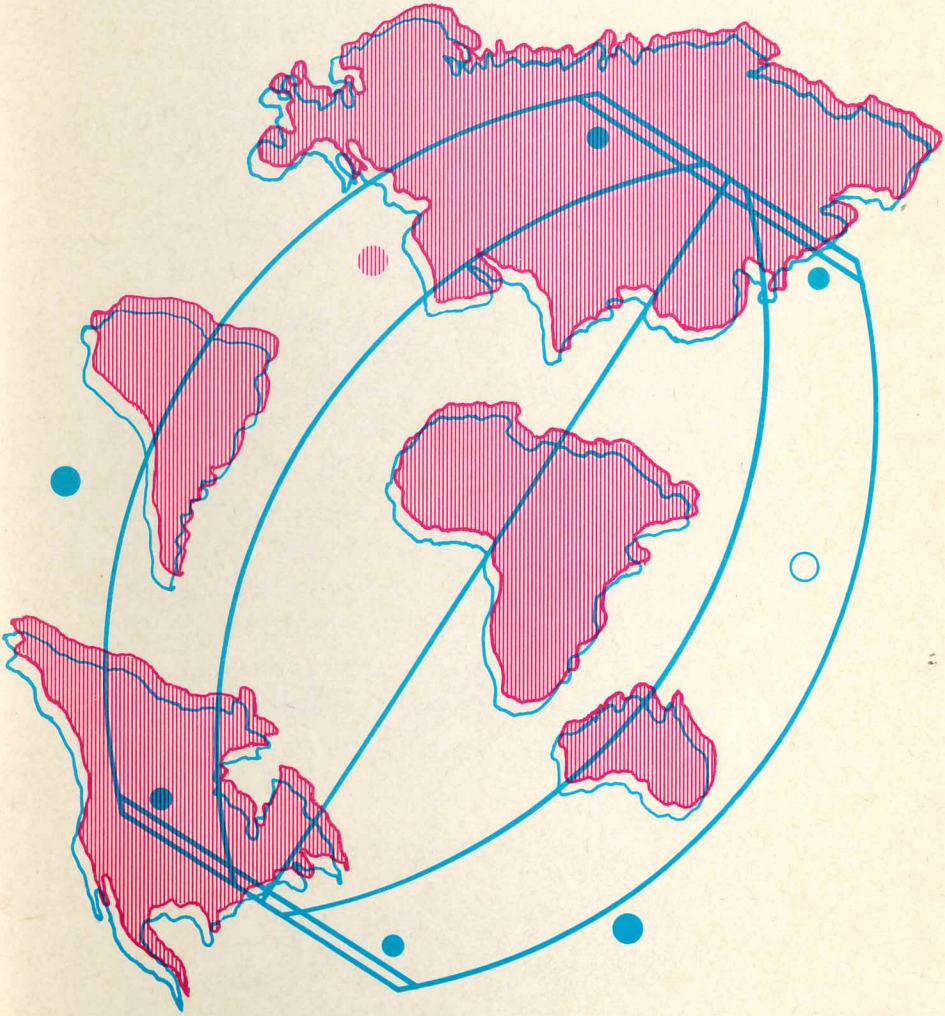
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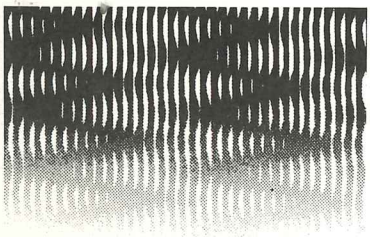
ANTIGONE AND HIGH TECH



SUNDAY NOV. 4, 1984

WALTER HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

8:00 p.m.



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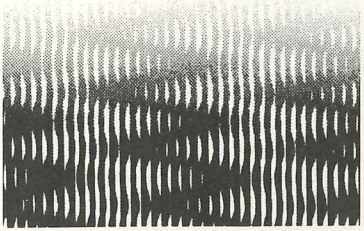
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NEW MUSIC CONCERTS is generously supported by The Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, the Toronto Arts Council.
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ANTIGONE AND HIGH TECH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1984

IN VERTICAL FIRE

JEAN PICHÉ

(1984) for digitally-processed sound and 'celli continuo

FRATRES

ARVO PÄRT

(1982) for 12 'celli

'CELLISTS

David Hetherington	David Miller
Audrey King	Peter Schenkman
Ron Laurie	Henry van der Sloot

RON LYNCH Audio Engineer

* * *

INTERMISSION

* * *

ANTIGONE-LÈGEND

FREDERIC RZEWSKI

(1982) text: Sophocles/Hölderlin/Brecht/Malina

CAROL PLANTAMURA	Soprano
FREDERIC RZEWSKI	Composer/Pianist
FELIX MIRBT	Design
LOUISE LAPOINTE	Design Assistant

Tonight's program is being broadcast live on CBC Stereo's TWO NEW HOURS, 94.1 FM

JEAN PICHÉ

JEAN PICHÉ was born in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in 1951. He has pursued music composition as a career since the late 1960's and has studied at Laval, Simon Fraser, and Stanford Universities as well as the Institute for Sonology in Utrecht, Holland. Concentrating on electronic music from the start, he has worked in electronic music studios throughout the world on numerous scholarships and research grants. His music has been performed and broadcast in most western countries and has earned Piché several international awards. Heliograms, an album of his computer music, has been released by Melbourne records. His current interests include the integration of various performance media.

IN VERTICAL FIRE (1984)

Jean Piché's IN VERTICAL FIRE was created using the Fairlight Computer Music Instrument. All of the digitized sounds were obtained from acoustical recordings of strings; violin, viola, 'cello, and contrabass. As in most minimalist music, IN VERTICAL FIRE uses a relentlessly unchanging metre to allow PICHÉ to control very specifically the development of the vertical structure of the work. The real interest in the piece lies in the sonority (or sonorities) produced by the minute millisecond changes which can be specified in this context. It is the constant pulse which gives IN VERTICAL FIRE its inevitable organic sense of growth from the calm beginning to the crashing climax. IN VERTICAL FIRE is a NEW MUSIC CONCERTS commission with the assistance of the Canada Council.

Black top raging beneath city lights,
Fall left on a plane
Like mad science cast as savior
On the six o'clock news.
/
Sister with a cool air
Props her ankle on a stool.

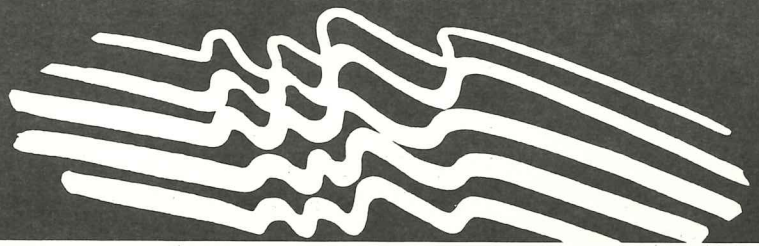
Overnight in slow quarters;
Dues paid and time to spare.
You started speaking
Of blindness without the burden,
Of feeling with neither word nor light,
Of touching taking the eye for the hand.
/
At midnight in a motion
In Vertical Fire we stood.

Tired couch on a slow evening
Now you speak of child, food, and shelter.
Care, you say, will be shown
With constant reappraisal
Of ties, vows, and promises...
/
Fall left, sister,
Even for a moment.

The television flicker kept me awake
With city builders on a rampage.
Keep in touch, you said, the child is calling
And won't be around for another month.
Black top still raging.
/
At midnight in a motion,
In Vertical Fire we stand.

-Jean Piché (October, 1984)

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ARVO PÄRT

ARVO PÄRT was born September 11, 1935 in Paide, Estonia. He attended the Tallinn Conservatory and studied composition with Heina Eller. From 1957 to 1968 he worked as a music producer for Estonian Radio. Since 1980, he has lived in Vienna, working as a freelance composer.

PÄRT's earliest compositions are in the neoclassic style. Through his association with Estonian Radio he became acquainted with all the styles of the avant-garde, including the most radical. Gradually, his interest centred on a melodic and harmonic vocabulary derived from triads, and his own individualistic style emerged. Virtually all of the works which PART now supports were written after 1977.

FRATRES for 12 'celli (1982)

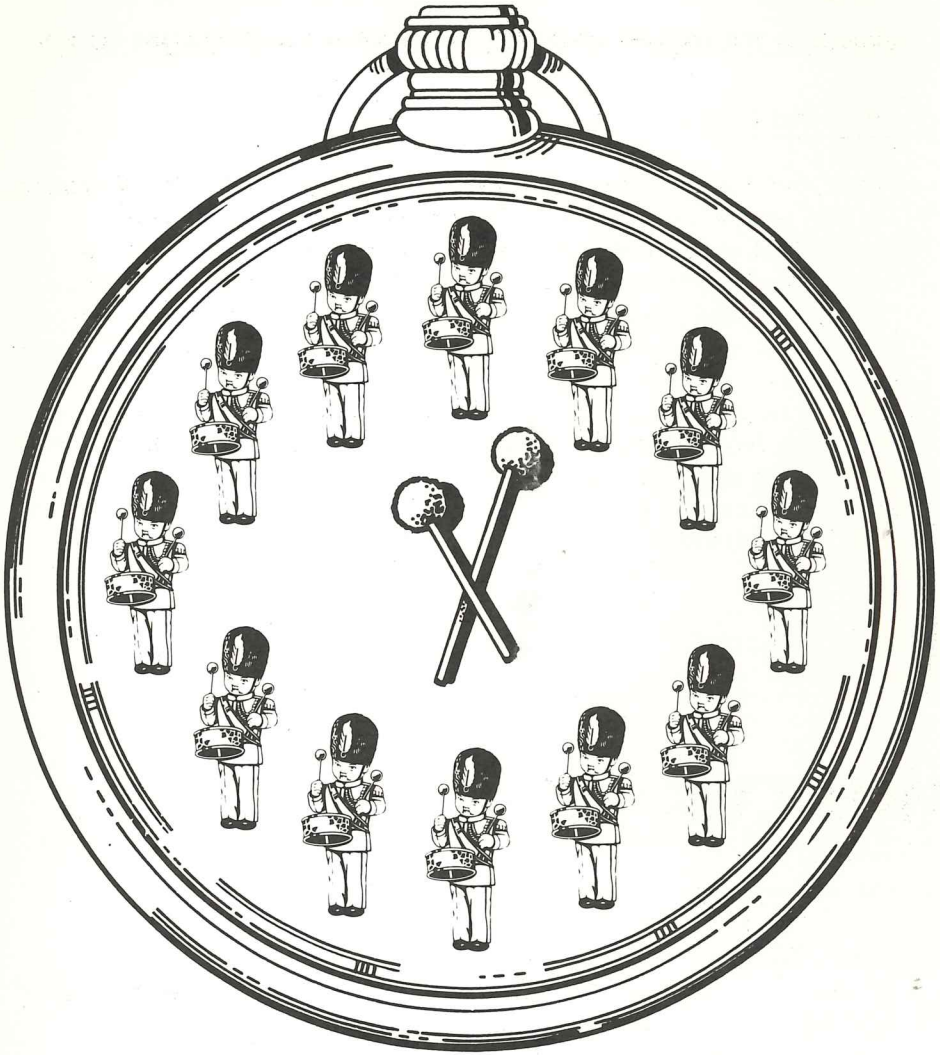
FRATRES for 12 'celli is actually scored in five parts, three melodic parts and two drones. There are five PÄRT works which bear the title FRATRES. The earliest, FRATRES I, three part music for violas or new instruments, dates from 1977. Others are FRATRES II (1980), three part music for solo violin and viola or new instruments and the work on tonight's program, receiving its Canadian Premiere.

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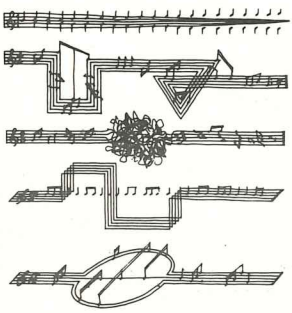
or plug into the sound of a different drummer on cable.

FREDERIC RZEWSKI

FREDERIC RZEWSKI attended Harvard and Princeton Universities, where in addition to music, he studied philosophy and literature. He was a Fulbright Fellow in Rome from 1969 to 1962, and lived in Berlin from 1963 to 1965 on a Ford Foundation Fellowship. Since 1960, he has performed professionally as a pianist, premiering new works by Stockhausen, Pousseur, Feldman, and others. In 1966 he helped found the Musica Elettronica Viva studio in Rome, where he makes his home. Many of his ideas have been influenced by non-musical disciplines and by the music of John Cage, David Tudor and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

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ANTIGONE-LEGEND

The following is the preface to the score of ANTIGONE-LEGEND, written by Frederic Rzewski:

The ANTIGONE-LEGEND is a 189-line poem in dactylic hexameter, written in a kind of pseudo-archaic German, which Brecht drafted at the time of his return to Europe in December, 1947, simultaneously with his adaptation for the stage of Hölderlin's translation of the ANTIGONE of Sophocles. The "bridge-verses", in which the dramatic action of the play in condensed in narrative form, as if in a sort of folk-epic, were secondarily intended as an exercise for another long-standing project (never realized): a version in verse of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. But their principal function was another, practical one, directly related to the play's first performance in Chur, Switzerland: During the rehearsals, the lines from the LEGEND corresponding to the scene about to be played were read by the stage-manager to each actor before his/her entrance. The purpose of this operation was, in Brecht's words, to "subordinate the spectacle to the story" (Preface to the ANTIGONEMODELL). One of Brecht's main objectives in adapting the Sophocles-Hölderin text was to bring the "highly realistic folk-legend" out of the "ideological fog" which surrounded it (Diaries, December 16, 1947). The use of the LEGEND as a transitional text to be recited backstage between scenes was supposed to prevent the "transformation of the actor into the character"; the actor's main function was to "point" out, to show what was going on (Preface to the ANTIGONE-MODELL).

In my setting of Brecht's poem I have tried to remain faithful to this basic conception:

First: The piece should be performed, if possible, not as pure concert music, but rather as an accompaniment to a visual representation of the play's action. This can be realized in two ways: either with simple, hand-held puppets, manipulated by the singer herself or by a third person; or with a screen on which the most

important scenes are painted, comic-strip style, and which may be cranked continuously from right to left, or flipped over periodically. In this way I mean to preserve the "pointing" function of Brecht's text and to avoid the risk of losing the element of action in the sterile ritual of the concert-hall.

Second: I have tried with various musical means to reinforce the "folk-realism" of Brecht's treatment in the following ways:

(a) The strophic structure of the poem is preserved in the music. Each strophe has a duration of 12 seconds: the number of strophes is extended to 261, so there are 72 strophes in which no text appears: these are mostly places where normally a chorus would be sung, but which here are meant to serve as a musical accompaniment for puppet-dances which may subsequently be choreographed.

(b) The rhythms of the sung text are mostly written very simply with few melismas and even fewer large leaps, systematically in order to exclude both operatic and "avant-garde" cliches. But at the same time the text is often chopped up into short, asymmetrical fragments, in order to heighten the effect of certain unconventional Brechtian constructions.

(c) A number of effects are used, such as the pianist's vocal sounds, knocking on wood, the singer's drum, a bell, and an optional tape-recording of thunder at the end (the thunder may also be simulated with other means). These sounds are meant not so much as "noise-music", of the kind frequently encountered in avant-garde concerts; but rather as a sort of pseudo-musical evocation of a corresponding dramatic situation, somewhat akin to Brecht's peculiar concept of "Misuk".

(d) For the construction of the melodic-harmonic material an all-interval twelve-tone row was used; not, however, in the manner of the Schönberg-Webern-Darmstadt tradition, i.e. neither as a neutral, permutable "tonal cement", nor as a hierarchical Platonic system of proportions, from which all concrete details are deduced and justified; but rather closer, perhaps, to

Hauer's "Zwölftonspiele" or to Indian ragas: The twelve-tone row and its individual parts function like a scale, a source of melodies, to say that they come from this or that identifiable musical culture. I have sought in this way to arrive at a musical parallel to Brecht's strangely archaic rehashing of Hölderlin's German. The pseudo-ancient flavor of the German is largely absent from Judith Malina's translation, which is written in more or less modern idiomatic English; in exchange, however, it adheres with remarkable fidelity both to the sense and to the meter of the original, and in some cases I feel it is better suited to the music than Brecht's text itself.

I wrote the ANTIGONE-LEGEND between April and November, 1982, at a time when on the world-stage another tragic story was played out, of a country which had forgotten the wisdom which could have been learned from earlier tragedies:

> "That's right. That's how it is. Anyone who
> uses violence against his enemy
> Will turn and use violence against his own people."
>
> (ANTIGONE, vv. 433-4, tr. Malina)

As I worked every day on my piece, I often had the uncanny feeling that I was not dealing with material from the past, but on the contrary with a continuing story which from day to day approached its fateful end. This was not exactly a pleasant sensation; but perhaps therein lies a clue to why such a tale continues to speak to us today after thousands of years.

My piece is repectfully dedicated to Roswitha Trexler.

-Frederic Rzewski (November, 1982)

CAROL PLANTAMURA

CAROL PLANTAMURA graduated from Occidental College in Los Angeles in 1964. Her first professional engagement was with the Monday Evening Concerts under the baton of Pierre Boulez. In 1964, she became one of the first Creative Associates of the State University of New York at Buffalo. From 1966 to 1976 she made her home in Italy, from whence she performed at concerts extensively throughout Europe, Australia, and Japan. She was also one of the original members of Musica Elettronica Viva.

Many composers have written works for her, including such internationally recognised names as Alsina, Bussotti, Crumb, Globokar, and Reynolds. She is well represented on disc, having recorded for several international labels, among them Wergo, DGG, and CRI. Her talents as writer and educator combined in 1983 when she wrote a children's coloring book called WOMEN COMPOSERS published by Bellerophon Press.

FELIX MIRBT

FELIX MIRBT has designed stage settings and theatrical devices in Canada and Europe. His unique vision is well known to Toronto audiences from his settings of Brecht's HAPPY END for the Tarragon Theatre and Strindberg's A DREAM PLAY for the Toronto International Theatre Festival. Mr. Mirbt's setting ANTIGONE-LEGEND was made possible with the generous assistance of the Theatre Section of the Canada Council.





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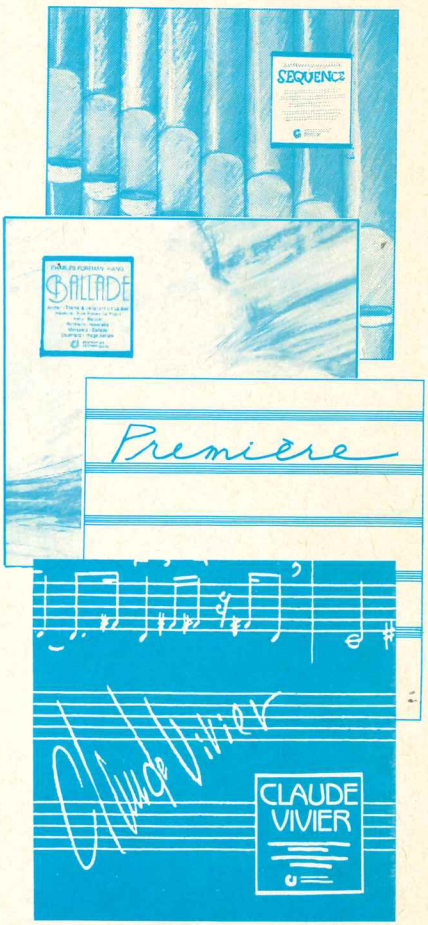
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